

## THE EVERLASTING ARMS

Theodore L. Cuyler

One of the sweetest passages in the Bible is this one: "Underneath are the everlasting arms." It is not often preached from; perhaps because it is felt to be so much richer and more touching than anything we ministers can say about it. But what a vivid idea it gives of the Divine support! The first idea of infancy is of resting in arms which maternal love never allows to become weary. Sick-room experiences confirm the impression when we have seen a feeble mother or sister lifted from the bed of pain by the stronger ones of the household. In the case of our Heavenly Father, the arms are felt, but not seen. The invisible secret support comes to the soul in its hours of weakness or trouble; for God knoweth our feebleness, He remembereth that we are dust.

We often sink very low under the weight of sorrows. Sudden disappointments can carry us, in an hour, from the heights down to the very depths. Props that we leaned upon are stricken away. What God means by it very often is just to bring us down to "the everlasting arms." We did not feel our need of them before. We were "making flesh our arm," and relying on human comforts or resources. When my little boy dashes off to his play, brimful of glee, he does not stop to think much about his parents; but let him be taken suddenly sick, or an accident befall him, his first thought is to go to his mother. God often lays His hand heavily upon us to remind us that we have a FATHER. When my neighbor A—— broke in business, and twenty-four hours made him a bankrupt, he came home, saying to himself, "Well, my money is gone, but Jesus is left." He did not merely come down to "hard pan," he came to something far more solid,—to the everlasting arms. When another friend laid her beautiful boy in his coffin, after the scarlet-fever had done its worst, she laid her own sorrowful heart upon the everlasting arms. The dear little sleeper was there already. The Shepherd had His lamb.

There is something about deep sorrow that tends to wake up the child-feeling in all of us. A man of giant intellect becomes like a little child when a great grief smites him, or when a grave opens beneath his bedroom or his fire-side. I have seen a stout sailor, who laughed at the tempest, come home when he was sick, and let his old mother nurse him as if he were a baby. He was willing to lean on the arms that had never failed him. So a Christian in the time of trouble is brought to this child-feeling. He wants to lean somewhere, to talk to somebody, to have somebody love him and hold him up. His extremity becomes God's opportunity. Then his humbled, broken spirit cries out, —

"O Lord, a little helpless child  
Comes to Thee this day for rest;  
Take me, fold me in Thy arms,  
Hold my head upon Thy breast."

One great purpose in all affliction is to bring us down to the everlasting arms. What new strength and peace it gives us to feel them underneath us! We know that, far as we may have sunk, we cannot go any farther. Those mighty arms can not only hold us, they can lift us up. They can carry us along. Faith, in its essence, is simply a resting on the everlasting arms. It is trusting them, and not our

own weakness. The sublime act of Jesus as our Redeemer was to descend to the lowest depths of human depravity and guilt, and to bring up His redeemed ones from that horrible pit in His loving arms. Faith is just the clinging to those arms, and nothing more.

This first lesson in conversion is to be practised and repeated all through the subsequent Christian life. To endeavor to lift our own souls by our own strength, is as absurd as to attempt to lift our bodies by grasping hold of our own clothes. The lift must come from God. Faith cries out, "O my Lord, Thou hast a mighty arm; hold me up." The response from heaven is, "I have found thee; Mine arm shall strengthen thee; on My arm shalt thou trust."

Here lies the very core of the doctrine of "Assurance." It simply means that I can feel, and every Christian believer can feel perfectly sure that the everlasting arms will never break and never fail us. I am not so sure that in some moment of waywardness, or pride, or self-sufficiency, I may not forsake those arms, and trust to my own wretched weakness. Then the curse which God has pronounced on those who depart from Him and "make flesh their arm" is certain to come upon me. I learn from bitter experience what a pitiable object even a Christian can be when he has forsaken the Living Fountain, and has nothing left but his own broken cistern. God's Word is full of precious encouragement to faith, but it contains terrible warnings against presumption and self-confidence. And while Presumption is swinging on its spider's web over the perilous precipice, Faith calmly says,—

"All my trust on Thee is stayed,  
All my help from Thee I bring."

While Unbelief is floundering through the darkness, or sinking in the waves of despair, Faith triumphantly sings,—

"Safe in the arms of Jesus,  
Safe on His gentle breast,  
Here, by His love o'ershadowed,  
Sweetly my soul doth rest."

This is the theology for times of temptation. Such times are sure to come. They are the testing processes. A late Sunday's equinoctial gale tested every tree in the forest; only the rotten ones came down. When we read or hear how some professed Christian has turned defaulter, or lapsed into drunkenness, or slipped from the communion-table into open disgrace, it simply means that a human arm has broken. The man had forsaken the everlasting arms. David did it once, and fell. Daniel did not do it, he stood. "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations."

This is a precious theology, this theology of trust, for the sick-room. We called in this week to visit one of Christ's suffering flock. We talked for a time about the ordinary consolations for such cases as hers. Presently we said, "There is a sweet text that has been running in our mind for days past: it is this, 'Underneath are the everlasting arms.'" The tears came in a moment; that precious passage went to the right spot; it did good like a medicine; and our suffering friend lay more comfortable on that bed of pain from feeling that underneath her were the everlasting arms. Reader, may they be under thy head in the dying hour!

## WEDDINGS

Smith - Dearborn

Vernon LeRoy Smith, of Mattawamkeag, and Reti Marion Dearborn, of Crystal, were united in marriage Sunday morning, Feb. 19th, at the Reformed Baptist parsonage at Crystal, Maine. The service was performed by Rev. S. G. Hilyard.

## OBITUARY

The funeral services for the late **Jerome Fogg**, of Belvedere Siding, in Crystal, Maine, were conducted March 23rd from the Reformed Baptist Church at Belvedere by Rev. S. G. Hilyard, who spoke from James 4:14. Two hymns were sung by a trio composed of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Main and son, Jerry, with Mrs. Richard Porter as organist.

Mr. Fogg is survived by his wife and eleven children, six sons and five daughters, two brothers and a sister.

Interment was in the vault at Island Falls, burial to be made in the family lot in the Crystal cemetery.

**John Thorne**, 82, of Belvedere, in Crystal, Maine, departed this life to be with his Saviour, Saturday, May 6th, after a short illness.

He is survived by his wife, two sons, Harold, at home, Joseph, of Dover-Foxcroft, Maine; one daughter, Mrs. Luna Humphrey, of Hodgdon, Maine; two sisters, five grand-children.

Brother Thorne was a staunch Christian, always interested in promoting the work of the Kingdom in his community. For many years a member and officer in the Free Baptist Church in Belvedere and since the reorganization into a Reformed Baptist Church held the office of deacon and treasurer. For a number of years and at the time of his death was Superintendent of the Sunday School.

The funeral service was conducted from the Reformed Baptist Church in Belvedere, Monday, May 8th, by Rev. S. G. Hilyard, preaching from I. Sam. 20:18: "Thou shalt be missed, for thy seat will be empty." Two hymns were sung by Mr. and Mrs. Fred Mann, of Crystal.

The floral tributes were many and beautiful. Interment was made in the Crystal cemetery.

A workman has gone to his reward. May his mantle fall on another.

To the sorrowing we extend our sympathy.  
S. G. HILYARD

## WHEN YOU PRAY

Long prayers and long sermons tend to quench the fire instead of kindling it. Brethren, in all things has our Lord Jesus given us the best example—also in regard to praying. When with His disciples, His prayers were of medium length. In the midst of a large crowd, as at Lazarus' grave and the feeding of the five thousand. His prayer was short. When He was alone with His Father, in the Garden or on the Mount—then He prayed all night.

So ought ye also to do, dear brethren. Among God's children, make your prayer medium long, as Jesus did when He was about to be crucified. When in a crowd or with the sick or dying or the unfortunate, short. When you are alone with your Father in your secret closet, pray as long as you please.

—C. H. Spurgeon.